Electronic Voting: What's It All About?

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson's top priority is to ensure the integrity of every vote cast. He has established the strictest voting system certification standards in the nation and a rigorous set of checks and balances to protect the integrity of every vote cast, no matter what kind of machines are used.

"California has been a national leader in implementing innovative and comprehensive security measures for electronic voting machines, many of which represent the best and most effective that we have identified, to secure the integrity of each vote. In doing so, the state has taken important and necessary steps to ensure that each Californian's vote is accurately recorded and protected," said Lawrence Norden, Chair of the Brennan Center Task Force on Voting System Security.

The Benefits of Electronic Voting Systems

➢ Electronic voting machines allow voters with disabilities for the first time, to cast their ballots privately and independently.
➢ The easy to use machines result in fewer voter errors compared to other voting systems.
➢ They can easily accommodate multiple languages, a federal requirement.
➢ They make voting simpler and allow voters to catch errors such as inadvertently voting for too few (under voting) or too many (over voting) candidates in a single race.
➢ Electronic voting reduces the costs and environmental effects of elections by reducing the need for expensive paper ballots.
➢ Their use assists California in complying with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirements.
➢ All electronic voting machines used in California elections are equipped with voter verified paper audit trails (VVPAT) to ensure the integrity of every vote cast.
➢ They can easily accommodate multiple ballot types for use in various kinds of elections (i.e. primary, general, special, etc.).

The Strictest Voting System Certification Standards in the Nation

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson requires that any voting system used in California meet the strictest standards in the nation.

➢ Systems undergo a thorough 3-tiered certification process (extensive testing at the federal, state and local levels).
➢ A complete review of the system's firmware, hardware and software is conducted at the federal and state levels.
➢ All systems must meet 10 strict standards, including California's first-in-the-nation volume test to ensure the systems can withstand Election Day levels of activity. (visit www.ss.ca.gov for a complete list of all 10 standards)
➢ Once systems have met federal and state requirements, counties conduct additional testing, again testing the hardware and software.

A Rigorous Set of Checks and Balances

As a condition for use of the machines, county election officials must adhere to a specific set of use procedures and security measures leading up to, on and after Election Day.

Pre-Election Day Security Measures

- For those systems with removable memory cards, each voting system's memory card is serialized and inserted into the system in the presence of at least two elections officials at the county level, and a tamper evident seal with a serial number on it is applied to the protective case covering the memory card.
- The tamper evident seals with serial numbers will indicate if the system's internal mechanisms have been exposed at any point leading up to Election Day.
- The county must maintain a written log recording which memory cards and tamper evident seals, along with serial numbers are assigned to each machine.
- Additionally, the county must maintain a written log that accurately records the chain of custody of each memory card and unit from the point of programming the memory card for use in the election through the time of completion of the official canvass.
- Prior to a county deploying a system to the polling places, counties conduct logic and accuracy testing (L&A) to ensure that the systems are operating accurately and reliably, and are correctly programmed for the election.
- Only after these steps have been completed and recorded will the system be placed under the control of the poll inspector, who is instructed to keep machines in a secure location until needed on Election Day.
  - Poll Inspectors are paid county election workers who are subject to training and certification, sign an oath as an election inspector, are responsible for the oversight of election in the polling place (including opening, closing and certifying results) and oversee other poll workers.

Election Day Security Procedures

- Secretary McPherson has established a parallel monitoring program that will test electronic voting systems while in use on Election Day. The program is designed to ensure votes are being recorded accurately. On November 7th, testing will be conducted on the following systems, in two counties for each system: Diebold AccuVote-TSX, Sequoia Edge, Hart eSlate, and the ES&S AutoMARK.
- In addition to parallel monitoring, Secretary McPherson has implemented an Election Day observation program in 31 counties. The observers will be ensuring that election procedures and security measures are being followed and that equipment is operating properly. They will also be checking accessibility of both facility and equipment, voter privacy, and if the election is running smoothly.
- Prior to a system being used on Election Day, a review of the system and the tamper evident seals is conducted by at least two election officials at the county level.
- If any of the seals are broken or have been tampered with, the system must be removed and a complete inspection of the system must be conducted. Additionally, a full report must be done and submitted to the Secretary of State's office.

- ➤ Prior to the system being used on Election Day, a report must be run on each voting system to ensure that no activity has occurred on the system. The "zero tape" must be established prior to use.
- ➤ All electronic voting systems in California are required to have a voter verified paper audit trail, which allows the voter to confirm his or her selections prior to finalizing his or her vote at the polling place. California was among the first states in the nation to require the VVPAT and many other states are following suit.

Post Election Day Procedures

- ➤ The mandatory paper audit trail will be used for a **full** recount if necessary.
- ➤ These paper records are used for the mandatory 1% manual recount that occurs in every county and for every election. This recount will ensure that the votes recorded on the systems match with what is displayed on the paper trail record.
- ➤ In addition, after each election, the county elections officials conduct post election logic and accuracy testing to ensure, once again, that the systems have operated accurately and reliably on Election Day.